

**COASTAL IMPACT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(CIAP)
FY 2008
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1. PROJECT TITLE: Mini-Siphon into Blind River at Romeville Site
2. ENTITY NOMINATING THE PROJECT: St. James Parish Council
3. CONTACT INFORMATION: Mr. Jody Chenier
St. James Parish Council
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4. TOTAL CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$5,400,000
5. PARISH CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$800,000
6. STATE CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$4,600,000
7. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS PROPOSED: None
8. DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PROJECT: The St. James Parish Council plans to team up with the State to build a mini-siphon over the Mississippi River levee at Romeville, La. The Parish plans to purchase a 68 acre tract of land from the Mississippi River to the St. James East Bank Canal. The siphon would dump freshwater into a depository canal to be built at the foot of the Mississippi River levee in Section 11 and continue through Section 31, located in T-11-S, R-4-E. The siphon and depository canal would allow freshwater into the Blind River wetland areas. The freshwater would provide needed nutrients and sediments that would enhance wetland restoration and improve water quality. The LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries owns all of the land where the canal would discharge into the wetlands. The depository canal property is owned by the Parish Council; thus, land rights would not be an obstacle in design and operation of this project.

The freshwater diversion will take advantage of natural topographies and hydrologic features to re-establish input of basic resources and circulation obtained through freshwater induction. This site in the upper reach of Blind River was previously examined as an alternative site in the Bonnet Carre Diversion Study.

The proposed project would consist of two 72" diameter steel pipes that will extend from the Mississippi River, over the levee, and empty into a discharge pond. From the discharge pond, a 400 square foot channel will extend approximately 15,000 feet into the Parish cross-cut canal, which empties into Blind River.

9. PROJECT TYPE: Conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal areas, including wetlands.
10. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: The siphon project will re-establish input of freshwater into the Blind River wetlands. The swamps and wetlands adjacent to the river and its tributary streams exhibit conditions of stagnation and low oxygen. The construction of flood protection levees along the Mississippi River terminated the needed hydrologic connection of the river to this portion of the deltaic plain. This loss of freshwater and needed nutrients causes significant short term salinity increases and stress of vegetation, including the dominant species of bald cypress.

Significant reduction of hydrologic conditions and loss of freshwater circulation causes stagnant conditions and low dissolved oxygen levels. The loss of regeneration of second growth cypress-tupelo forest lead to eventual loss of the wetland forest. This project is listed in the Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan for the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

11. PROJECT COST SHARE (NON-CIAP FUNDS): The Parish will use its own equipment and labor to clear the agriculture property and prepare land for digging the necessary channel from the Mississippi River to the Parish canal. The Parish plans to spend approximately \$45,000 to complete this work.